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(71) Applicant(s):

Baker Hughes Incorporated
(Incorporated in USA - Texas)
3900 Essex Lane, Suite 1200, Houston,
TX 77027, United States of America

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None

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(54) Abstract Title: Drilling system and method for controlling equivalent circulating density during drilling of wellbores

(57) A drilling system for drilling subsea wellbores includes a tubing-conveyed drill bit that passes through a subsea wellhead. Surface supplied drilling fluid flows through the tubing, discharges at the drill bit, returns to the wellhead through a wellbore annulus, and flows to the surface via a riser extending from the wellhead. A flow restriction device positioned in the riser restricts the flow of the returning fluid while an active fluid device controllably discharges fluid from a location below to just above the flow restriction device in the riser, thereby controlling bottomhole pressure and equivalent circulating density ("ECD"). Alternatively, the fluid is discharged into a separate return line thereby providing dual gradient drilling while controlling bottomhole pressure and ECD. A controller controls the energy and thus the speed of the pump in response to downhole measurement(s) to maintain the ECD at a predetermined value or within a predetermined range.

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(72) Inventor(s):

Peter Fontana

Peter S Aronstam

Larry Watkins

(74) Agent and/or Address for Service:

Murgltroyd & Company

Scotland House, 165-169 Scotland Street,

GLASGOW, G5 8PL, United Kingdom

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